

Interview with John G. Kormann

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

JOHN G. KORMANN

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Initial interview date: February 7, 1996

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Q: John, tell me how you became interested in Foreign Affairs and eventually became a Foreign Service Officer?

KORMANN: My interest in Foreign Affairs was an outgrowth of my service in the Army in World War II. A few days after my paratroop unit dropped into Germany, I was ordered to report to Division Intelligence. Someone must have taken note that I was fluent in German: I became part of a team which had as one of its missions, the capture of high ranking Nazis. Then at war's end I was subsequently stationed in Berlin in charge of a Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) field office. I had many dealings from 1945 to 1947 with the Russians, who were running espionage agents into the city, kidnapping German scientists and involved in many other activities of interest to our organization. It was very exciting and at times made headlines in the newspapers. We were also detailed from time to time on special projects. One of my assignments was finding Hitler's deputy, Martin Bormann, another was capturing "Axis Sally." With Bormann we had no success and I made a final report that Bormann died on top of a tank in the Neukolln area of Berlin. Capturing "Axis Sally" was a success and created quite a stir in the United States, when we brought her in.

Q: What happened after you left Berlin?

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KORMANN: I returned to Columbia in September 1947 to finish my college studies, complete a Master's and work toward a Ph.D. For the latter, my dissertation subject was "U.S. Denazification Policy in Germany from 1944 - 1950" an area in which I had some expertise, growing out of my Berlin experience. Incidentally, the dissertation was later published by the Department of State, by HICOG's Historical Division as a monograph in response to requests from Congress for information on denazification in Germany.

Q: That sounds great. Then what happened?

KORMANN: When the State Department was looking for personnel to become Resident Officers to replace the Military Governors in Germany, my name was suggested to State Department personnel. I joined the Department as a limited appointee on a five year contract in September 1950. After a few weeks of basic training with a group of FSOs (it's interesting to note that my wife comments on this training in Jewell Fenzi's book *Married to the Foreign Service*) we were sent to Germany. Once there, while the rest of the group received language and area training, I was assigned immediately. First in Frankfurt at the Amerika Haus, helping Hans Tuck who was the Amerika Haus Director, and then later in Munich filling in for Paul Deibel, who was the Operations Officer, the number three for the Field Operations Division for all of Bavaria. When Deibel returned, I was given Neumarkt as a county. Neumarkt is just southeast of Nuremberg. I had two other counties in the area as well. It was interesting governing this area, consisting of 600 square miles with 100,000 people. As I reflect back on my duty there, the greatest problem I had during my tenure was when the United States Army decided to requisition the Hohenfels region in my county of Neumarkt as a troop training area. This was a vast, rough section suitable for tank training. However, it meant moving thousands of Germans from their ancestral homes; many families had lived there for 800 to 1000 years. It's interesting to note now that when Hohenfels is mentioned to any American soldier having served in Germany, he rolls his eyes and thinks of the training he received there, which more than likely was not too pleasant.

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Q: This must have caused some problems in your relations with the Germans, what happened there?

KORMANN: I recall very well a session of our Kreistag. Kreistag was the county legislature. I remember the legislators were visibly upset by the thought that the U.S. Army was going to move in and take over this sizeable piece of property and throw Germans off of the land. I recall giving an impassioned speech in German to them saying, "Well fine, so you don't want the American Army there, remember the Russians are just a short march away. We'll pull out and we'll let the Russians come in. If that's what you want, be my guest." Obviously the Germans were very unhappy hearing things like that and the Kreistag voted approval to turn the land over to the U.S. Army.

Q: What about some other aspects of the job?

KORMANN: Well, we had all sorts of functions. We were quasi-magistrates, we were the Public Affairs Officers, we did all kinds of things in that job and it was one of the most interesting positions I ever had in the Foreign Service. If you can imagine a junior officer coming into a post where he's going to have the finest house in town, an ambassadorial-size office, a Mercedes limousine with a driver and be given all sorts of responsibilities, without any real supervision (my bosses were many miles away), one could not have asked for a better job. However, this strangely enough did not suit a number of the new incoming Foreign Service Officers. Some of them actually "revolted." I remember there was a young Foreign Service Officer by the name of Ken Martindale, who led a protest and 18 Foreign Service Officers signed a letter to High Commissioner McCloy saying they didn't come into the Foreign Service to do that; they wanted traditional Foreign Service jobs. Years later, I often wondered how they must have been enjoying their service in some of the Third World backwaters, stamping visas. For me, the job in Neumarkt, I've often quipped, was the best job I ever had and I went backwards from then on. I might say a word about the Resident Officers, if anyone is really interested in what the Resident Officers did, the February 1952 issue of Collier's magazine put out a wonderful article on

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“Democracy's Best Salesman in Germany”. It was a lengthy piece, with pictures, on the U.S. Resident Officer program. I might say immodestly, I feature largely in that article.

Q: I gather that all of this made quite an impact on German-American relations?

KORMANN: I remember when I left, I was the last American Military Governor/Resident Officer to preside in the area and the Germans had several farewell parties for me. It almost looked as if the “father figure” was leaving them; they felt left all alone. Part of this of course, was engendered by the attitude of the Resident Officers, which was akin to being a Congressman. One of my responsibilities, I felt, was to go to Frankfurt and to Bonn to obtain as much money as I possibly could for my counties out of the counterpart funds that were being made available to build schools and to carry out other “pork barrel” activities. Consequently the Germans were really very, very happy to have us there and felt at a loss when we left.

Q: Have you ever been back to the area since then?

KORMANN: Yes I have. I went back about 15 or 20 years later and the old Burgermeister was still there. He welcomed me with open arms.

Q: That sounds like a great start to your career. What was your next assignment?

KORMANN: From there I was assigned to close the Resident Office in Coburg, on the Russian border. I was there for a short time and then was sent to Hannover in the British zone, where I served as a Public Affairs Officer. The occupation was phasing out and we were moving over to Embassy status. Public affairs activities were more “in tune” with Germany as a country obtaining sovereignty. My responsibility there was to supervise the U.S. Press Service, a wire service supplying German media, all of the newspapers and the radio stations in Lower Saxony. It was a very interesting position and brought me into the press world. I remember when I reported there, I visited my British counterpart, who wondered what we were doing opening an office in Hannover, when things were phasing

Library of Congress

out. He didn't say this to me directly, but he was full of insight at the time, because the office didn't last very long. We built a huge plant, requisitioned a building, put in parking lots, purchased vehicles and did all kinds of things. Before a year was out, the place was closed down and all of that money went to waste.

Q: Then I take it, you were off on home leave?

KORMANN: Yes, I went on home leave near the conclusion of that assignment. I returned to the U.S. on the S.S. America. Ambassador George Kennan was on board. He had just been PNGed as Ambassador to Moscow.

Q: As I recall, that was because he tried to make a comparison between Stalin and Hitler.

KORMANN: He was asked by the press whether he enjoyed Moscow and what it was like to serve in the U.S.S.R. Of course, your movement there was limited, and he compared it to his internment in Germany during WW II. He did this in an off-handed way. I believe he may have thought he was off-the-record. The German press picked up his remarks. They were noted by the Russian leadership, who took severe umbrage. My own view is that the Soviets really wanted him out of the country. He was just too well informed on Communist affairs and exerted a great deal of influence on the rest of the diplomatic community in Moscow. When we neared New York harbor, the pilot boat came abreast and disgorged a score of reporters. Our relations with Russia were always front page news. Ambassador Kennan did not want to meet with them and went into seclusion. Another FSO aboard, Herbert Fales, came to me saying, "You're a press officer. You had better take care of these fellows." I had quite a time dealing with the reporters. Once we landed and I was departing the ship, I did see the Ambassador giving them a brief statement, in any event.

In March of 1953, I was transferred to Bonn to replace Joseph Frankenstein, who was being removed as the Chief Editor of the Amerika Dienst, the U.S. Press Service for Germany. Frankenstein and his wife, the writer Kay Boyle, were targets of Senator McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee. I was totally unaware of

Library of Congress

these circumstances when I was told to take over the job. I simply thought of it as an opportunity to move into a very responsible position rated several grades above the one I held at the time. I might add I loathed McCarthy and would have welcomed an opportunity to confront his two traveling investigators, Roy Cohn and G. David Schine. They did come to Hannover at one point, going through the Amerika Haus library there, causing quite a stir. However, they never came out to my press service establishment. I felt that I had a really strong anti-Communist background from my battles with the Russians in Berlin 1945-47 and oddly was a bit disappointed when they did not appear. When I reported in to my new office, I found Frankenstein still at the desk. I naively wished him well in his new position in Washington. He responded, "I'm not going anywhere, I'm staying right here." That dumbfounded me and I went to see the senior officers in the Embassy saying, "What is going on?" Then they told me that Frankenstein was being removed because of McCarthy and that I should go back and tell him to leave. Stunned, I replied, "I am not going anywhere. You can have the security boys straighten this out. When he is gone, I will go in and take over the job." Frankenstein hung on for about a week and it was all very unpleasant. It was made more difficult by the fact that everyone thought I must have been a McCarthy hireling to have been moved up so rapidly into the position. I made matters worse by going up to Rotterdam over the following weekend to pick up my mother-in-law who was arriving by ship. The Embassy, by then fully aware of Frankenstein's situation, gave him a farewell party, which was attended by Ambassador James Conant. My absence, I was told later, was duly noted and confirmed everyone's suspicions of me. For a time other employees kept their distance, but the situation eventually straightened itself out.

I enjoyed Bonn and the job was a real challenge. I supervised a wire service, as well as a series of feature publications in German; a political weekly, an economic weekly, a women's monthly, a cultural monthly, and a youth publication. In addition, for extended periods, I was the Embassy's press briefer. The latter was a real exercise in discipline. I would arrive at the Embassy at 5-6 o'clock in the morning and read a dozen or so German

Library of Congress

newspapers and periodicals and then brief Embassy officers. There were quite a few very able officers in that group, including John Patton Davies, Bill Buffum, Jock Dean, Ray Lisle and several others who went on to have noteworthy careers.

Q: I understand that you had to do a little speech writing too?

KORMANN: Yes, I did. I remember one speech in particular. Ernest Wiener, a member of the policy staff at the Embassy (bear in mind the Bonn Embassy was huge in those days) came to me saying, "Kormann, Ambassador Conant is going to give a speech to the (US) Reserve Officers' Association, and he wants to use it to provide guidance to the Germans, who are about to establish a Bundeswehr. He would like to set the tone for a future German army. You are a reserve officer and know something about military affairs, why don't you take a crack at a draft?" I wrote a speech entitled, "The Citizen Soldier," which Ambassador Conant, who was a former President of Harvard and a legendary figure, used in toto. The speech received widespread coverage in the German press. I have always felt that I had a hand in shaping the German military as a consequence and look back on that speech with pride.

Q: Where did you go after that assignment?

KORMANN: At the conclusion of my tour in the spring of 1955, I returned to Washington. Before leaving, however, I was given instructions upon my return to explain an unhappy gaffe involving the Embassy to Ambassador Riddleberger, who was then in charge of German affairs in the Department. HICOG, and later the Embassy, had a program of supporting the German publishing industry with counterpart funds. One of the many projects financed was a "Synchronoptic History of the World" (Synchronoptische Weltgeschichte). The publication was a large, colorful, fold-out chart book which depicted history in all facets of life (political, cultural, scientific, etc.) from the beginning of recorded time. The two German professors authoring the work, Arno and Liselotte Peters, a husband and wife team, were labeled as being Communists. The publication somehow

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had come to the attention of the U.S. Congress and the Peters were accused, for example, of making much of the birth and death of Lenin and other Communist figures, while neglecting Jesus Christ (which was not exactly true). The book, I remember it well, was pulled back and every copy destroyed. The Embassy was criticized for ever having allowed it to be published. I explained the situation to Ambassador Riddleberger, pointing out the difficulty in overseeing a work with such dictionary/encyclopedia proportions and in effect said the entire matter was a “red herring.” After a while Congress seemed satisfied and the situation quieted down.

Upon my return to Washington in 1955, I was assigned to the newly created U.S. Information Agency. I was placed on the policy staff and given responsibility for the satellite states of Eastern Europe. In graduate school at Columbia I had taken courses on the area. That plus my experience in post-war Berlin seemed to persuade personnel that I had expertise, when in reality it was very limited. One of my tasks was to provide guidance to the Voice of America in its broadcasting. This was a tumultuous time in Eastern Europe, with uprisings in Poland and Hungary. President Eisenhower and others had used the term “liberating Eastern Europe,” which gave rise to unfulfilled expectations on the part of people in those countries. Many persons then declared that the usage of such terminology was an underlying factor in prompting the Hungarian revolution. I am more inclined, however, to cite a general relaxation of the Soviet Union's iron grip after the death of Stalin as the primary cause. At the time of the Hungarian revolution, I can recall VOA begging me for guidance. I in turn asked my colleagues in the State Department for something to say. We simply watched that debacle play itself out, doing nothing. In reality, short of risking war there was very little we could do. Nevertheless, it was not America's finest hour. The result was a flood of refugees into Europe and this country.

My policy staff job with USIA afforded me an opportunity to sit in on a number of interesting policy formulating meetings. I participated in Operation Coordinating Board task force sessions. I was an alternate member of a committee on strategic information (the Seago Committee, named after its chairman), which met in the Department of Commerce

Library of Congress

to regulate the influx of propaganda (mail and other matter) from Communist countries. To inhibit the flow of propaganda, the committee established a government policy of holding back mail from Communist countries at post offices, then sending a card to the recipients asking them whether they wanted the material. While I participated in the inception of this policy, I was also, as will later be recounted in this interview, responsible in part for a U.S. Supreme Court case leading to its demise.

Those were interesting times in the shaping of our relations with Russia. I remember participating in the deliberations of working level groups leading to a National Security Council Directive in 1956 on exchanges with the Soviet Union. It stressed the importance of promoting exchange with the Communist countries. Communism had within it the seeds of its own dissolution. It could not stand the test of broad scale exposure to the West. The more people in Russia and the satellites visited the West and vice versa the more difficult it would become to control rising expectations under communism. Then too, as time went on, there would be a gradual mellowing in Soviet society, as leadership passed hands. As I look back on it now those deliberations were, and that directive was, prescient, but at the time they were violently attacked by right-wing members of Congress. The chairman of the group, I believe it was FSO Frederick Merrill, was severely criticized, when information about the directive leaked out. It was "those pinkos in the State Department selling out the country again." In the long run the policy proved to be correct as we have seen history play itself out. Some of those officers who were pilloried at the time, really did their country a service.

Q: Previously you were in USIA and now I understand you wanted to get back to State and become an FSO. What happened next?

KORMANN: Desirous of getting back over into State, I took a job as a program operations officer on the UNESCO Relations Staff (URS). At the time, I thought it was far out on the periphery, but it was a way of getting back and a foot in the door. It turned out to be a fascinating job. Problems in the United Nations played themselves out in microcosm in

Library of Congress

the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Many grew out of the East-West conflict and I dealt with a good number of them. URS had a dual function: It was the State Department office servicing our representative to UNESCO, headquartered in Paris, and it provided the executive secretariat for the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, a 100 person advisory body of outstanding Americans. To be a member was highly prestigious; it was a "Medal of Freedom" type group. As program operations officer my area was the social and natural sciences. I would serve as an executive secretary for conferences of commission members in those fields. The chairman of the natural science committee, for example, was Dr. Athelstan Spilhaus, an internationally recognized scientist. I was the State Department staff person, and we would work closely together, attending meetings of the committee here and abroad. On the social sciences side, the situation was much the same.

I will never forget a meeting we had right after the Soviets launched "Sputnik." The U.S. had planned to launch its own satellite and I was charged with obtaining a model of it to send to Paris for some international affair involving UNESCO. I remember acquiring the model, which looked like a basketball with spikes, from, I believe, the Navy. They were in charge of the project and were to launch it into space with a Vanguard rocket. After arranging to have a State Department diplomatic courier take it to Paris, I recall placing it on my filing cabinet prior to packing it the following day. I need not have bothered. Before I could do so, the Soviets were in space and my model was an embarrassment. At our Natural Sciences Committee meeting I can remember the concern of our scientists. What stands out most clearly in my mind, however, was their conclusion that the Russian lead would be short-lived, for the U.S. was far superior to the Soviet Union in basic research and that was what really mattered.

You may be interested to know that UNESCO held the first meeting of any UN body in the Federal Republic of Germany. It was an Executive Board session in Bonn in 1958 or

Library of Congress

1959. I was an advisor to our delegation. The Germans went all-out to be good hosts. Later Germany was admitted to the UN.

I was assigned as an advisor to a delegation of four noted social scientists to a UNESCO-sponsored "Conference on Peaceful Coexistence/Cooperation Among Nations" in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1959. It was the first international conference of any UN body behind the "Iron Curtain." Our government was unhappy about the precedent; it also took a dim view to providing this sounding board for Communist propaganda. I had some unnerving experiences, growing out of my earlier intelligence background. Not much was accomplished, but there was a great deal of high-level rhetoric. At the conclusion of the conference, Dr. Everett Hughes, an eminent sociologist in the delegation, came to me with a large stack of educational material, seemingly Communist propaganda, he asked to have sent home by the Embassy. Everything from Prague, including personal mail, had to go out by courier pouch. After discussing the matter with Embassy colleagues, I explained the situation to Hughes and suggested either he send it by regular post, himself, or have the Czech conference organizers do it for him. I thought no more about it until a year or more later, I saw an article in the newspaper citing Hughes as a plaintiff in a U.S. Supreme Court case, which ruled the Seago Committee's policy of temporarily holding back mail from Communist countries unconstitutional. Recalling my earlier participation in the deliberations of that committee setting the policy in 1955, it indeed was a strange turn of events.

Q: I understand then in 1960, you finally moved in as an FSO under the 517 lateral entry program. Is that right?

KORMANN: Yes, I did. It took me almost 10 years finally to become an FSO. My first position then was as a special assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, Andrew Berding, who had been my overall boss in USIA earlier. I was part of the Policy Planning and Guidance Staff of that Bureau. I had a wide variety of duties: providing policy guidance to USIA, writing speeches, acting as a point of contact for private American

Library of Congress

organizations invited to international meetings such as the Communist “World Youth Festivals” or other Soviet-sponsored gatherings. I served on a variety of committees and task forces. For example, I was the Department's representative on the Postmaster General's Committee on Commemorative stamps. That may sound esoteric, but it was quite challenging. There were many individuals and pressure groups desirous of having stamps issued, who would contact me. There were always ceremonies in conjunction with the issuance of these stamps. When they had an international character, such as the Mahatma Gandhi stamp in the “Champion of Liberty” series, it was up to me to arrange for the Secretary or one of his deputies to be the speaker and to do a draft speech. Dean Rusk had just come on board in January 1961 and I arranged to have him do the honors. It was his first, but admittedly unimportant speech, as Secretary of State. I wrote what I thought was a “humdinger” and sent it up to the 7th floor. I heard no more about it. The Secretary said nothing driving down to the Post Office Department. Imagine my surprise, when he went to the podium, carefully enunciated my salutation and then launched off on his own. I was stunned as he reminisced about how sitting on a bed in a room at Oxford, he had listened to Gandhi in the early 30's. The audience was enthralled; the Indian Ambassador beamed. I doubt if I have ever been taken down a peg so deftly.

Another stamp incident in the same series was far less pleasant. I received a call from the Post Office Department asking how the Finnish hero, Carl Mannerheim spelled his first name, with a “C” or a “K.” My references indicated a “C,” but to be sure I called the Finnish Embassy and spoke to the DCM. I gave him the reason for my question and its importance. He insisted that it was spelled in good Finnish fashion with a “K” and his answer was relayed to the Post Office Department. Well, Mannerheim must have been born a maverick, for it was spelled with a “C,” fouling up a run of stamps, which had to be held back at the cost of many, many thousands of dollars.

One of my other duties was drafting “Infoguides,” policy statements on issues, which were sent to our posts abroad for their information, as well as over to USIA for their media guidance. On these, I would work with officers in other bureaus, who would provide me

Library of Congress

with positions and often specific language for the texts. There were times when two bureaus had differing approaches to a situation, such as on the Sino-Soviet split, the disengagement of Peking from Moscow. I would find myself the arbiter, trying to draft a “middle of the road” statement. Infoguides took an infinite amount of time to clear through all the offices concerned and generally required high level approval before they were sent out.

If you were at all involved in the process of diplomatic communication with our posts abroad or developing policy positions, much of your time was spent in clearance procedures. Either you were trying to get your message or paper cleared through other offices or someone was coming to you with theirs. In this context, I recall Dick (Richard T.) Davies coming to me in May of 1960 with a news release. He was the Public Affairs Advisor for the Office of Soviet Affairs. It was about a NASA weather plane that had strayed off course and gone down somewhere in the vicinity of the Russo-Turkish border, possibly in the Soviet Union. It looked innocuous enough. Planes had crashed before and it seemed routine. I signed off on it for the P Bureau and it went down to the newsroom for release by Lincoln White, the Department's spokesman. The plane, of course, was the U-2 and the release a cover story and blatant lie. The consequences were terrible, as we dug ourselves deeper into a hole, culminating in President Eisenhower admitting that he had personally authorized the spy-flight. It was a clear violation of international law. I must say this is one of the cases where State was completely in the dark. I know my Assistant Secretary knew nothing about the U-2 program and I am reasonably sure Secretary Herter was not informed either or we would never have placed ourselves in that position.

I attended a number of working level meetings for our bureau. One was a Berlin task force session, which met right after the East Germans/Russians started constructing the wall. I remember saying that I had spent two years in Berlin, 1946-47, as an Army CIC officer charged with the security of the long sector border of the Neukolln District. We had a number of incursions by Russian troops and we always dealt with them forcefully. The Russians/East Germans understood and came to expect our “no nonsense”

Library of Congress

approach. I said the way to handle the situation was to tell the colonel commanding the 16th Infantry Regiment to take his tank support and simply knock the wall down without delay. Ambassador "Chip" (Charles) Bohlen, who was chairing the meeting, I think was a bit startled to have a back-seat participant make such a suggestion. He dismissed the idea and particularly reacted negatively to my gratuitous afterthought, "If the colonel succeeds, fine; if we run into trouble, you can always disavow his action, remove him and later promote him." That was a bit too Machiavellian for him. I also wrote a memorandum suggesting prompt, forceful action which did not go very far. I am convinced that it would have worked, sparing everybody much grief. General Clay, the former Military Governor of Germany, also, I believe, recommended strong steps somewhat afterward, but by that time it may have been too late.

The most taxing single assignment I had while in PPG grew out of a request from Assistant Secretary Berding that I respond to a requirement from the United Nations for a formal national report on freedom of information in the U.S. Wisely, the UN Bureau had ducked this one and tossed it over to us. I soon realized that what was called for in answer to the UN's questions would take a Ph.D. thesis. It required among other things, information on all facets of the media; legislation covering the flow of information; access to news; standards and codes of ethics; training of journalists; copyright protection; governmental efforts to assist the flow; and steps taken to promote information about the UN through governmental and other sources. The amount of research required was staggering. Mr. Berding said, "Take as much time as you need," but the report was due at the UN in less than a month. I called my wife, who was a Bryn Mawr summa cum laude and a tremendous researcher, for assistance. (This was one more case in those days when wives labored for the Department gratis.) Arrangements were made for us to have an office in the stacks at the Library of Congress. We worked night and day and in a month we completed a 120 page highly detailed document, which received favorable comment from the UN Secretariat and other sources. The task was indicative of the kind of assignment you suddenly can find yourself in at State.

Library of Congress

Q: That sounds like the approximate size of most UN documents.

KORMANN: That's right. Our office also cleared speeches of high level officials of other government departments, when they dealt with foreign affairs. I once cleared a speech for Admiral Arleigh Burke, when he was Chief of Naval Operations. It was to be given, I believe, in Copenhagen. A strong speech, it had several anti-Soviet remarks in it. I made a number of annotations on the draft. On the margin of one section, I commented, "the only thing we are not saying here is that we are going to bomb Moscow!" Most of these speeches were written by underlings such as myself, but perhaps this one wasn't. I was in bed one morning several days later listening to the 6:30 news on the radio, when the voice of Senator Strom Thurmond came on criticizing "some bureaucrat in the State Department," who was telling Admiral Burke how to run his business. From the references made, it was obvious he was talking about the speech and my comments. I expected the roof to cave in when I got to the office, but my boss took it pretty much in stride.

Q: This brings us to 1962 and I see you were attending the Mid-Career Course. What was your next assignment?

KORMANN: I was assigned to Manila as Political Officer. A travel freeze kept me in the U.S., however, for several months. In the interim, I filled in for the Philippine Desk Officer. While there I had a bit of trouble with Ambassador Harriman, who at the time was the Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. He visited the Philippines and while there entered into negotiations about tobacco. He sent a message back about the negotiations in which he indicated that we should pass the information on to Congressman Cooley, the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee. I did so. A few days later there was an item in the newspaper about the matter, citing Cooley. Ambassador Harriman saw the item and was extremely upset, saying, "Who told Congress about this?" I said, "I did." He was furious at me. I wanted to get out the telegram and show him his instructions, but under

Library of Congress

the circumstances thought better of it. He was a great man, but at his age he had lapses of memory.

Some time after my arrival in Manila, Glen Fisher, the Minerals Attach#, came to me and asked whether I would be interested in joining him on a flight to Borneo. He had a single engine "Piper" airplane and would island-hop the thousand or more miles down the Sulu Archipelago over to Borneo, and then follow the coast north to Sandarac, which had formerly been part of the British protectorate of North Borneo, more recently called Sabah. It sounded like a great adventure to me and an opportunity to do some good reporting. However, there were political implications, since Sabah was now part of the newly formed state of Malaysia, which was at war with Indonesia. The area was a combat zone. I discussed the matter with DCM Richard Service and he, in turn, with Ambassador William Stevenson. Both took a dim view of the idea. I then found out that several officers had been invited to make the trip on earlier occasions, but had declined. I also learned that no plane had flown out of the southern Philippines since WW II and that we would be landing on makeshift fields or beaches. For some reason the Ambassador changed his mind and the trip was on. Just prior to our departure, the British Military Attach# came to my office requesting assistance. A launch with English men and women aboard had been captured in the waters off Borneo by a Sulu pirate named Amok. The captives were taken to one of the many small islands in the southern Philippines. Could we help in locating them or obtain any information about them? The trip was fascinating. Fisher turned out to be an excellent, methodical and cautious pilot. Having said that, I reflect in awe at the mountain passes and thunderheads we flew through, not to say the vast stretches of jungle and tropical seas. In the latter from our height, which was never much more than a 1,000 feet, one could spot the shadows of the sharks below. There were stretches over Borneo for hundreds of miles with no sign of habitation. In Sandakan, which was a miniature Hong Kong, I met with the British Resident and government officials, receiving much information for my report. On our return, we actually spotted the launch lying on its side on a sandbar

Library of Congress

up a river estuary on the small island of Subuti. When that story sorted itself out, the men turned out to be Borneo Chinese and the women Hong Kong prostitutes. (laughter)

I should say something here about President Kennedy. I don't know what your experience was when he was assassinated, but the impact in the Philippines was tremendous. Being a Catholic country with close ties to America and Kennedy, himself, and his wife being so charming, the Filipinos really took them to their hearts. The outpouring of grief was unbelievable. We had to set up a team of Embassy wives to respond to the gifts and the thousands of letters of condolences received. There was a memorial service which had a vast attendance. Subsequently, when his brother, Bobby, came out to "mediate" the Indonesian- Malaysian conflict months later, we had trouble controlling the masses at the airport. Crowds rioted, breaking through glass windows of the terminal just to see him. I was control officer for the visit. Ambassador Stevenson and I went to the Presidential Palace the morning after the Attorney General's arrival to brief him. He was in his suite with Ed Gluckman, his advisor and press assistant. As the Ambassador talked, Bobby paced up and down, at times sitting briefly. He appeared extremely forceful and dynamic. As he paced, I said to myself, "the only thing he is not doing is sticking his hand in his shirt, or else I would be seeing an impersonation of Napoleon." I made the mistake of inadvertently glancing at the ceiling during the Ambassador's briefing, which I had heard several times before, and Kennedy jumped on me for not paying attention. It was an unforgettable session.

In the middle of a state dinner given for the Attorney General and his wife Ethel, by President and Mrs. Macapagal, he arose, walked out of the Palace in his evening clothes and at 10 p.m. ordered his Air Force plane made ready to fly immediately to Kuala Lumpur. He was not scheduled to leave until two days later. At the dinner, someone must have informed him that the week of Ramadan was to set in the following evening. Malaysia being a Muslim country, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister, would go into seclusion. If there was to be a meeting with him, it had to be the next day. Evidently no one in the Kennedy party informed him about Ramadan, nor had they taken the trouble

Library of Congress

to find out. To me it was always amazing how high-handed and slipshod the doings of the mighty could be. I had the appalling task of trying to round up the Kennedy party of 90 people scattered in night clubs and other places about town. Thank goodness we managed to locate the pilot and most of the crew fairly promptly. Kennedy fumed, while he impatiently waited at the airport for several hours until the take-off was readied. As it was, he left several of his party behind, who could not be located in time. I had never up to that point sent a "flash" designated message, the kind that denotes imminent nuclear attack. At Kennedy's instruction, I sent four that night. Our poor ambassador in Kuala Lumpur must have been beside himself to arrange for that middle of the night arrival. There was a great sigh of relief at our Embassy, when they had gone. (laughter) Between setting up military helicopters to fly Ethel to the hairdresser and trying to pack all their suitcases, when the Kennedys went straight out to the airport, we were exhausted. I am sure the Macapagals must have been offended; one does not ordinarily treat heads-of-state in that fashion.

We had a great many Congressional delegations visit Manila when I was there. I was control officer for more than my share of these. Many were worthwhile, but some were outrageous. I recall a visit of Senator Daniel Brewster of Maryland, one of the worst. He was a member of the Armed Services Committee, which was stopping off on a fact-finding tour at the time. Brewster had wired ahead to set up a helicopter to take him out to Corregidor Island. He arrived separately from Vietnam at about 4 o'clock in the evening, much later than planned. By that time, the helicopter awaiting him had returned to Sangley Naval Air Station, since it would be too dangerous to make the flight after dark. The Senator was furious, demanding the helicopter take him then and there. I called Capt. Ed Spruance, the Chief of Staff at Sangley (the son of famous WW II Admiral Spruance) and over protests and his better judgment, he reluctantly sent back the helicopter. Aboard were the pilot, the Senator, our Naval Attaché, William Lazenby, and myself. Once on Corregidor, the Senator persisted in delaying our return, which assured our return to the Embassy in complete darkness. We were going to have to land in the Embassy parking lot surrounded by trees. Brewster throughout was obnoxious, until at one point Capt. Lazenby

Library of Congress

said, "Senator, my name is Lazenby, my family is the Lazenby family of Maryland, and I am ashamed that you are my senator!" I thought, "My goodness, there goes a fine naval officer's career; what a gutsy thing to do!" On our return, emergency steps were taken by Embassy personnel to ring the small parking lot with cars turned toward the center, headlights on, for visibility. As we came in for a very risky landing, the Ambassador was entertaining the Senate Armed Services Committee and about 100 guests on the Embassy roof-garden. The helicopter literally blew everything away, from table cloths, food and glasses to ladies hairdos. The party was a shambles. Senator Brewster, later, I believe, was removed from office.

During my four plus years in Manila, I witnessed a steadily souring in our relations, spurred on by leftist elements and the war in Vietnam. There were numerous demonstrations against the Embassy. While a part of the large political section under Counselor Max Krebs and later Richard Usher, I was promoted to supervising political officer, charged with external affairs. For a period of 18 months, I also handled military relations and bases negotiation matters, concluding the Corregidor Memorial Treaty. It was a highly charged time, with a conflict on between Indonesia and Malaysia and the Philippines tangentially involved. Then, too, we were massively engaged in an effort to support our operations in Vietnam. The Philippines was a staging area for much of that activity. I did a great deal of reporting, sending telegram after telegram back to the State Department.

There were exertions on our part to make the Vietnam war look like an international struggle to stop the Communist north. To this end we were pressing other countries to send troops to Vietnam, including, of course, the Philippines. After Herculean efforts we finally persuaded them to contribute a regiment of engineers, which we underwrote financially, even to the payment of salaries. Their contribution to the war effort, at best, was negligible. In this connection, Henry Cabot Lodge, visited Manila on his way to taking up his post as our Ambassador to Saigon. I was the control officer for his visit. I made arrangements for his meeting with President Macapagal. I called for him with the Ambassador's Cadillac at the Manila Hotel. Usually for high level trips through the

Library of Congress

impassably crowded streets we requested a motorcycle escort from the Manila police, which they provided. When Ambassador Lodge and I exited the hotel, he took one look at the escort and said, "Get rid of that right now! I don't want it!" I did as he asked. On the way to the Presidential Palace, he explained that one of the reasons he had defeated legendary Boston Mayor Curley in the Massachusetts gubernatorial election was because the people were fed up with Curley constantly roaring around with motorcycle escorts. Needless to say we were late for our appointment. My normal procedure with high level visitors was to go to the Embassy Com-center very early, 6:30-7 o'clock in the morning, to see if there were any cables my client should see. In Lodge's case, I went there extra early, only to find he had already been there. I felt a bit depressed after he left for Vietnam, thinking that I had not put on my best performance for him. Lo and behold, a week or so later a request came in from Saigon for my services. However, I showed no enthusiasm for the transfer, while my family took a resoundingly negative attitude, and nothing further was said, I think to our Ambassador's satisfaction.

I should say something about President Marcos, who assumed office during the latter part of my tour. The political section had a lot of contact with him while he was a senator. He was reputed to be a war hero, fighting the Japanese. However, there were suspicions that much of this was bogus. He was a good talker and we had hopes that he would effect a change in the corrupt political scene. After hearing his inaugural address, which had a John Kennedy flavor, we were enthusiastic. Of course, he was a great, great disappointment. I remember Vice President Hubert Humphrey came out for the inaugural and he shared our enthusiasm. Before the Vice President's trip, I was asked to draft an arrival statement and cable the text to Washington. At the airport, I was pleased to note that he used my five minute text, but then he went on and on spiritedly to speak for another 20 minutes, with us standing in the heat on the tarmac. While some Embassy colleagues wondered how I could possibly have drafted anything so long-winded for an arrival statement, I guess the Filipinos enjoyed it.

Library of Congress

Q: I take it you had quite a change in the next "go round."

KORMANN: I was transferred to North Africa, to Libya, an Arabic-speaking country and I thought that rather strange. I'd had no experience in the area, but I was prepared to accept whatever I was asked to do. On the plus side, it was my own post, Benghazi, which was in effect an Embassy. Libya was a bifurcated country: Cyrenaica in the east, Tripolitania in the west. The capital rotated every two years between Benghazi and Tripoli. However, most of the important ministries, foreign affairs, defense, etc., were located in Benghazi. Ambassador David Newsom during this biennium was in Tripoli and I was principal officer and consul in Benghazi. Newsom was a superb ambassador. He would travel the 700 miles from Tripoli to Benghazi regularly to cover his area. I finally set up a bedroom with bath in the residence for him, because he would stay for periods of time. I don't know how many FSOs end up living with the ambassador, but I certainly enjoyed him. He loved being with Arabs and conversing with them. I can still see us sitting on the ground deep in the Sahara Desert eating with them under conditions that would make many squeamish.

Ambassador Newsom called me one day saying that the 25th anniversary of the loss of "Lady Be Good," was approaching and that he wanted to see the plane far south in the desert. It was a WW II B-24 bomber, which on the return from a raid over Naples overflowed its airfield and crash-landed largely intact on automatic pilot. The nine-member crew bailed out and all perished in the desert. The plane and the bodies were undiscovered for more than 15 years. The trip was a fascinating adventure. Proceeding with two Land Rovers, a Jeep and a light Dodge truck, we had a difficult time finding the plane 400 miles into the Sahara and at one point became lost, almost wandering over the border into Egypt. The temperatures during the day were 120-130 degrees and at night dropped to around 40. We traveled for days without seeing a single living thing. Finding the plane was difficult. When we did, I was amazed at its state of preservation. Earlier when it was first found, the radio still worked and there was water in the canteens. I kicked one of the motor cowlings and fresh-looking oil dripped down. Had the crew stayed with the plane, they

Library of Congress

might have been rescued. As it was, there was not a prayer that they would have been able to traverse the Great Calanscio Sand Sea to the north, with its 100-200 foot high sand dunes. From the plane we proceeded another 350 miles farther south to the desert oasis village of Kufra, which was reminiscent of a scene out of Beau Geste and the French Foreign Legion. Incidentally, I took a number of slides of Kufra and surroundings. A few years ago my son, who was working at the time for Naval Intelligence, asked to borrow them for an analyst in his office interested in seeing them. I never got them back. The analyst was Jonathan Pollard, who was jailed for spying for Israel.

The most harrowing experience of my Foreign Service career occurred in Benghazi at the outbreak of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Convinced by propaganda broadcasts that U.S. Navy planes were attacking Cairo, Libyan mobs spurred on by 2000 Egyptian workers building a pan- Arab Olympic stadium in Benghazi, attacked the Embassy. The streets were being repaired and there were piles of rocks everywhere, which the mob put to use. A detachment of soldiers provided by the Libyan Government to protect us was overwhelmed. The Embassy file room was full of highly classified material, which we desperately tried to burn. The Embassy had been a former bank building, with a heavy safe-type front door and barred windows. The mob finally battered its way in. They pushed themselves in through broken windows and came at us cut and bleeding. We were well armed, but I gave orders that there be no shooting, so we met them with axe handles and rifle butts. Dropping tear gas grenades, we fought our way up the stairs and locked ourselves in the second floor communications vault. We were able to continue burning files in 50 gallon drums on an inner courtyard balcony using Thermite grenades. There were 10 of us in the vault, including two women. The mobs set fire to the building. The heat, smoke and tear gas were intense, which while terrible for us, blessedly forced the mob from the building. We only had 5 gas masks for 10 people and shared them while we worked. We came out of the vault several times during the day to use fire extinguishers to control blazes and spray down walls. Our own destruction of files using Thermite sent up huge clouds of black smoke from the center of the building, probably adding

Library of Congress

to the impression that those of us inside were dying. With no power, we managed to send sporadic messages throughout the day using an emergency generator. Efforts by British troops to come to our aid were called off several times. A British armored car was destroyed by the mob in the vicinity of the Embassy, by pouring gasoline down the hatch and setting it afire with an officer and four soldiers inside. The British Embassy and British Council offices had been attacked and set afire, as were the USIS center and my former residence.

I might mention something here, because many people asked me about it afterward. At one point the mob used a ladder to drop from an adjoining building on to our roof, catching us trying to burn files there. After a struggle they drove us back into the Embassy. They cut the ropes on the tall roof flag pole, leaving the flag, itself, hanging down the front of the building. An Army MAAG captain, who was with us, requested permission to go up on the roof and raise the flag. I dismissed his request, saying it would be counterproductive. Later when things looked very bleak and our spirits were waning, he came to me again in front of the others. I told him I would think about it. I had been a combat paratrooper in WW II and had seen what defiance and a bit of bravura could do for soldiers under mortal stress. Afterward I said, "Go ahead, raise the flag!" He did so with considerable daring, the mob going crazy below and the rocks flying. The reaction among my people was profound. I could see it in their eyes, as they worked on with grim determination under those conditions to burn files and render cryptographic equipment inoperable. When late in the day (remember the attack began in the morning), we received word that a British rescue attempt had again been postponed for fear that lives might be lost, I took a photograph of President and Mrs. Johnson off the wall, broke it out of the frame and wrote a message on the back to the President saying something to the effect that we have tried our best to do our duty. Everyone signed it. When an inspector subsequently asked me about that, I could tell him that people will respond to the call of duty given the chance.

We sent our last message at about 6 p.m. I learned later from a friend, who was in the Operations Center in Washington, that it came in garbled, leading to the impression that

Library of Congress

we were burning alive. At that Secretary Rusk called the British Foreign Secretary with a further plea to get us out. At 8 p.m. a British armored column arrived and took us by truck to D'Aosta Barracks, their base on the outskirts of town. Libya had been a British protectorate after WW II and they still maintained a small military contingent outside of Benghazi under an agreement with King Idriss. The British were magnificent, rescuing us and then helping us bring hundreds of Americans to their camp, where they fed us and gave us shelter.

The night of our escape from the vault, I asked for a volunteer to go with me into the center of Benghazi at 2 a.m. to bring out Americans most in danger. The city was in flames, Jewish and foreign shops and properties having been set to the torch. Driving through the city we were repeatedly stopped by roadblocks manned by nervous, trigger-happy Libyan soldiers. The streets were full of debris. I remember pulling up to an apartment house lit only by fires from nearby burning shops. Going up the darkened stairs knocking on doors I asked for an American family. On the fourth floor, I heard a small voice say, "Who's there?" In English, I answered, "It's the American Consul." An American woman cautiously opened the door. She must have known me, because she called me by name and said, "We knew you'd come, we are all packed." What a wonderful tribute, I thought, to our Foreign Service. During that night and the next day we brought out other Americans under very trying circumstances.

We had problems in evacuating Americans from Benghazi. Arrangements were made for U.S. Air Force planes to pick up about 250 of them at the airport. At the last moment, I received word that Russian-built Algerian troop transports with paratroopers and Egyptian MiG fighters had landed at the airport. I didn't want our planes shot at. I didn't want a serious incident. Calling Tripoli, I talked with Ambassador Newsom. After listening to me, he said, "Well, John, you're the man on the spot. This is your decision to make." I made the decision to bring the planes in all right, but I must say really I wished that I hadn't had to, for I was truly worried. My wife and children were going to be aboard those planes, as well as a lot of other Americans, who could pay with their lives, should my decision be a

Library of Congress

bad one. The British provided trucks and a bus for the evacuees. They were taken on to the airport through an opening away from the terminal and driven right past the parked MiGs and Algerian transports. With the connivance of an English civilian air controller in the tower, contact was made with the incoming Air Force planes using a British Army field radio. They were instructed to land on the grass along the fence at the most distant part of the field away from the terminal. Three planes, two C-130's and a C-124, came in and made a fast turn around. They were loaded and back in the air in minutes. The operation was carried out with such speed and audacity that there was no reaction from anyone until much later. All of us will be forever grateful to Colonel Alistair Martin and his British troops for their role in all of these actions; without them, none of that would have been possible.

Q: You mentioned something about an award?

KORMANN: Yes. Our office, after this was concluded, was given a staff Superior Service Award. I received the Award for Heroism. At the ceremony that year, it topped the awards list for a living recipient. There were three others given posthumously.

I might say something here about Qadhafi. I returned to the U.S. in 1968 and a number of months later there was a coup in Libya. We were expecting one, because leading elements in the country were becoming exasperated with King Idriss, who was out of keeping with the times and too old to function properly. Libya was an oil-rich country and there were many underlying currents at work. We expected the coup to come from someone like Colonel Shalhi, the Army Chief of Staff and others in his group. Instead it came from junior officers like Qadhafi, who preempted them. Although I am not sure, I probably saw Lieutenant Qadhafi a number of times when he was the aide to the Chief of Signals, Colonel Mahdfi. Either Lt. Colonel Campbell, who headed the Army MAAG, or I would have Mahdfi and other senior officers as guests in our homes periodically. (We had a substantial MAAG operation in the communications field.) On those occasions, an aide would wait in Mahdfi's car with the driver; I believe it was Qadhafi. The question of course arises, why didn't we have contacts with the junior officers. The answer is that the

Library of Congress

situation simply did not permit it. A number of times I tried to invite officers at the captain or major level. They never accepted, feeling I am sure that it would be frowned on by their superiors. To invite lieutenants was simply out of the question in that structured society. I was told that Colonel Mahdfi was arrested and disappeared, after Qadhafi came to power.

When I returned to the Department in 1968, I was assigned as Officer-in-Charge of Liberian and Sierra Leonean Affairs. The United States had numerous interests in Liberia and Monrovia was a Class I post, with a relatively large Embassy. We had a regional communications relay station there and other support activities. On the commercial side, there was the Firestone Rubber Plantation. President Tubman, and later President Tolbert, headed the country and the lid was pretty much on things, but it was a potential powder keg. I went out there during my assignment. Ben Hill Brown was our ambassador in Monrovia at the time. There was an oligarchy of 400 ruling families, the descendants of former American slaves, superimposed above a mass of impoverished tribal peoples. It was a very corrupt, nepotistic society. While Liberia at the time was touted for its stability in a sea of African chaos, I could feel the discontent, while I was there. President Tolbert, a Methodist minister, was a frequent visitor to the U.S. At that time, he was head of the World Methodist Federation, and lionized by religious groups here. Americans had a soft spot in their hearts for Liberia growing out of religious ties and our historic relationship with the country's establishment. Firestone was very much in evidence; I visited its large plantation in the eastern part of the country. While the company had done much to improve the standards for the rubber workers, it still must have been an awfully difficult life for them. Synthetic rubber was making the operation of such plantations less cost effective and one had the sense that it and likely Liberia, too, were going down hill.

Sierra Leone, on the other hand, during my time was already a basket case. There had been coups and during a trip there, I witnessed the start of another. I was fortunate to get to the airport before things closed down on me. I might also mention that for part of the period of that assignment, I also was charged with handling Ghana.

Library of Congress

Ambassador Newsom returned from Libya to be Assistant Secretary for African Affairs and after less than a year on my assignment, I was asked to become the Politico-Military Advisor for the Bureau, replacing Jim Ruchti, who had been assigned to Stuttgart as Consul General. Newsom was aware of my background as an Army Reserve officer. For the next three years, my deputy Marine Corps Lt. Colonel Richard Critz, and I had a very busy time dealing with the military. We handled military assistance programs for 15 African countries. There were always problems with the Defense Department and the military services as they carried out their activities. I think in particular about our relations with CINCSTRIKE, Strike Command (the predecessor to Central Command), which had as its responsibility the Middle East and Africa. When military commanders are placed in charge of an area, they naturally immediately want to visit it and survey the situation. Under normal circumstances that would be fine, but when it comes to Africa, there can be real problems. When a 4-star general, with his staff of 3 and 2 star generals board their big military equivalent of a 4-engine Boeing 707 jet and land in little African countries, where the newly coup-installed president might be a captain or a sergeant, you have a recipe for trouble. At the very minimum, the president is going to expect a new military assistance package or an increase in an existing one. Why else would this galaxy of stars be coming to that country? Try, however, suggesting to the generals that they go out in civilian clothes aboard commercial aircraft, the way our diplomats do, and one might as well have tossed a skunk into a church meeting.

The 4-star Commander at STRIKE during my assignment was General John Throckmorton and when word of a proposed tour of this sort was sent to us for concurrence, Secretary Newsom and I took a dim view of it. We made our feelings known but ran up against stiff resistance. I urged our diplomatic advisor at STRIKE Headquarters at MacDill AFB in Tampa to see if stops in certain countries could not be called off or at least that there be a minimum high level entourage. Instead, the ambassador down there came back with a long letter to Newsom (my memory says it was 14 pages) justifying the trip which certainly didn't help matters. He, of course, to some extent was dependent

Library of Congress

on the General for his efficiency rating. Throckmorton complained to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Defense establishment and things started to get unpleasant. To straighten them out, General Throckmorton and party were asked to join Secretary Newsom and myself for lunch in State's executive dining rooms. I doubt if I have ever seen my boss more authoritative and by the time lunch was over, the General certainly got the message. My only regret was that I wasn't able to serve Secretary Newsom better and been able to avoid the entire situation.

One of our tasks was to arrange for visits to African ports by ships of the U.S. Navy. COMIDEASTFOR, the command based at Bahrain, regularly patrolled the Red Sea and Indian Ocean ports of East Africa with their destroyers and flagship, the "USS LaSalle." Djibouti, Mogadishu, Mombasa, Dar-es-Salaam, as well as island stops at Victoria in the Seychelles, Zanzibar, and Diego Suarez, a French base on the northern tip of Madagascar were among the ports. It was a constant struggle to assure that they were available. There were problems from time to time growing out of political unrest, sanctions, strained relations, etc., which would close a port, creating a hardship for sailors looking forward to shore leave. Supporting operations in Vietnam also presented difficulties periodically. I recall our efforts to sail the aircraft carrier "Saratoga" from Norfolk to Southeast Asia on an emergency basis. Sanctions had been imposed against South Africa. Ordinarily, a vessel of that size would have called at Cape Town for refueling, but under the circumstances that was barred to the Navy, making the latter entail the expense of sending fast fleet oilers to accompany the carrier. The additional cost, which sorely vexed the Navy, ran into many, many millions of dollars.

While I was Politico-Military Advisor for Africa the agreement to construct a U.S. naval base on Diego Garcia was brought to fruition. Diego Garcia is an atoll in the Chagos Island group and is a part of the British Indian Ocean Territories (BIOT). The base plays an important role in projecting American military presence into the Indian Ocean. Lying about 1,000 miles south of the Indian subcontinent below the Equator, it assists in providing around the world basing for ships and aircraft. During the course of the negotiations, India

Library of Congress

was a strong protagonist for making the Indian Ocean a nuclear free zone. This and other negative aspects of the situation impacted on State Department thinking and we moved reluctantly at the time (1968-72). However the Navy made a strong case for the acquisition of the base, particularly at a time when Soviet naval expansion was at its height. The latter was increasingly placing naval vessels into the Indian Ocean and a threat to the Middle East oil supply lines was envisaged. A significant part of the problem in setting up the base entailed the removal of 400 inhabitants, which was eventually accomplished by relocating them in the Seychelles. Every effort was made to minimize the public relations aspects of this problem. The securing of Diego Garcia enabled submarines previously operating from western Australia to move closer to the Middle East supply lines. In the event of war with the former Soviet Union, the base would assist our nuclear submarines in providing a ballistic missile firing platform, out of the Indian Ocean, over the Hindu Kush, directly into the heart of the U.S.S.R. The base subsequently played a significant role in support of the Gulf War; B-52 strikes were launched from there.

There was always a struggle every year over the amount of funds allocated to Africa in the military assistance program. At the time, legislation limited the number of countries, which could be recipients to 40 worldwide. Some 17 African countries by then had or were receiving such aid. However, the global amount of funds was limited, and made even more so by a preponderant share of the top going to Israel, mainly, and a few other countries. Battling for our share against other bureaus at times would go to the upper levels of the Department and I can remember at least one occasion when Under Secretary U. Alexis Johnson served as the referee, as I argued out our case with another bureau representative in his office. On occasion, we would have problems with the Congress over individual programs. Going to the Hill with Secretary Newsom over something to do with programs for Morocco and Ethiopia, I recall Senator Fulbright, the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, alternating between being nasty and going into long orations over the programs.

Library of Congress

The Foreign Military Sales Program (FMS) was another area of contention. One such instance was in the sale of five F-5 aircraft to Libya. They were bought and paid for prior to the Qadhafi takeover, but had not yet been delivered. A question then arose about the new phlegmatic leader and how he might put those planes to use. The Israelis were strongly against delivery, fearing that they might be used against them. From my experience, I felt at the time the Libyans, who were poor pilots, would simply fly these planes into the ground, which they had shown themselves fully capable of in the past. Unlike most of our programs, the planes were completely paid for and there was no sense in creating problems with Qadhafi, who up to that point had not shown himself to be that anti-American. The AIPAC, the Israeli lobby, really weighed in on the matter and the White House and the NSC (Henry Kissinger) were against the delivery. Secretary of State William Rogers advocated delivery. I had a not-so-tactful discussion with Newsom over the planes, saying at one point, "When you were in Tripoli, you were the Ambassador who signed the purchase agreement for the planes. How can you renege on it now?" He, irritated, replied, "You don't have to tell me I signed it. I know that, but there are more things involved here." He was looking at the broad political picture and, in hindsight, was right. This was one of those back and forth issues between Rogers and Kissinger, and I am afraid my heart was with Secretary Rogers. The planes were never given to Qadhafi.

Q: Well John, I guess this brings us up to 1972-1973 and at that point I understand you went off to the Army War College at Carlisle. Do you want to tell us about that?

KORMANN: That was a wonderful year. I was in the 1972-1973 Resident Class. Ambassador Hermann Eilts was a Deputy Commandant there at the time. I went through with a star-studded class. Two of my acquaintances rose to Chief of Staff of the Army, Generals Edward Meyer and Carl Vuono. Norman Schwarzkopf was a member of the class. I got to know these officers quite well and remember playing softball, tennis and volleyball with them. My wife came to know their wives, as well. I read a number of things later about how difficult a person Schwarzkopf was to deal with and how tough he was

Library of Congress

on his staff during the Gulf War. I found that hard to believe, because he struck me as such a nice, gregarious fellow. At the conclusion of our year, we had to complete a dissertation as a requirement. I did one on Military Assistance for Africa, believing it might be worthwhile all around were I to incorporate my three years of experience as a Politico-Military Advisor into something that might be useful to others as a reference. I had unique access to all the source material and it was not a difficult thing to do, even if covering the subject adequately made the work a bit more lengthy than the usual. I think the military appreciated having the study. I found, while there, that I was called on fairly often to assist with foreign visitors, who would be the Commandant Major General Franklin Davis' guests. I came to know General Davis well. We shared a WW II background and other military experiences. He knew I was an Army Reserve officer. When he heard I was up for promotion to colonel, he was aware it was a tight year for advancement to that grade. He really went out of his way calling friends in the Pentagon to assure that I would be given every consideration. I was promoted and have been forever grateful to him for that.

Q: I see that on your next assignment you were back in Germany again. Where were you stationed?

KORMANN: Actually, I was scheduled to go to South Africa, to Durban, as Consul General, but the officer in that position decided to extend. I then was sent to the Consulate General in Munich as the political officer and ostensibly the number two. I did a lot of reporting there on South German political factions. I was the point of contact with the flamboyant Franz-Joseph Strauss, who was quite an important figure in Germany, nationally.

Q: As I recall he became Defense Minister, didn't he?

KORMANN: That's correct. He was for a period of time earlier. I was in Munich for about five months, when I received a message from Ambassador Eilts, whom Secretary Kissinger had called from the War College to go to Egypt as his special emissary after the

Library of Congress

1973 War with Israel. We were in the process of refurbishing our relations and he asked me to come down as his DCM. When I arrived in Cairo the Russian military presence was still substantial, but President Anwar Sadat was revising his policy options. The American presence in Cairo was handled by an interests section, with a small group of officers working out of the old Embassy complex, which had been partially destroyed growing out of the rioting during the wars. With the conclusion of the 1973 War, Secretary Kissinger began his shuttle diplomacy. By the time I arrived early in the year, it was in full swing. The small staff of about 30 people, including the administrative support, was sorely taxed. The actual substantive officers amounted to fewer than 10, and these to deal with a major negotiating process headed up by the Secretary of State and his entourage of an Under Secretary, Assistant Secretary, ambassadors and NSC staffers and a planeload of 80-90 others, including nationally renowned correspondents. Our relations with Sadat grew increasingly more friendly, and within months he cast Egypt's lot with the West, largely ousting the Russians. We worked long hours, seven days a week. Ambassador Hermann Eilts was an able, but very tough taskmaster. With the reestablishment of diplomatic relations, he fought to keep the Embassy small, despite pressures from various agencies, such as the Departments of Agriculture and Justice, to return their representatives to Cairo. He reasoned the fewer people we had at that sensitive post in those days, the less that could go wrong. He probably was right, but it certainly was hard on me. I was acting as DCM, political counselor and economic counselor and coordinator for the Kissinger visits all at the same time. To cite a few other examples, I was charged with cooperating with the U.S. Navy in their major effort to clear the mines and sunken shipping out of the Suez Canal. I was the Embassy's point man on the negotiations for a new textile agreement, as well as on those to settle the large-scale claims against Egypt for the nationalization of American business under Nasser.

It was all very challenging and exciting. Illustrative of the way things were, I recall Ambassador Eilts coming to me late one afternoon and saying, "It's about time we urged the Department to consider an aid program for Egypt. Why don't you draft a telegram

Library of Congress

laying out some ideas.” I asked him how large he thought the program should be. After thinking a moment, he said, “About \$200-250 million.” I was no aid expert, but for that matter neither was I an expert on clearing the Suez Canal or textile agreements or many other things. Using resource material available and common sense, one did one's best. I stayed up that night and drafted a long 10-15 page telegram laying out what I thought a \$250 million Egyptian aid package should look like. It covered a range of different areas. Early the following day, I gave the Ambassador the draft telegram. He took it into his office and I was not at all sanguine. Not long after, he came out and handed me the draft which contained one or two modifications and said, “Send it.” To say I was surprised would be an understatement. I still expected some kind of rejoinder, once it got to the Department and the Agency for International Development (AID) considered the proposals, but none ever came. Not long afterward a two-man AID team came out to flesh out the program. That started what is today a multi-billion dollar aid program for Egypt.

I stopped counting the number of times the Kissinger party descended on us, often on short notice of only a few hours. Books have been written about the Kissinger Middle East shuttle diplomacy and there is not much I can add. I don't think anyone, at least in the accounts I have read, captures the uproar these stopovers created at the posts involved. One would think that after a while, they would become routine, but they never did. I don't know how many times I called the manager of the Hilton Hotel to tell him to clear out the two top floors for the Kissinger party, which included Under Secretary Sisco, Assistant Secretaries Atherton or Saunders, Ambassadors Bunker, McCloskey and Anderson, Executive Secretary Eagleburger, NSC staffers Winston Lord and Robert Oakley and a host of others. On occasion, Mrs. Kissinger would accompany the Secretary. Dozens of hotel occupants, many of them American businessmen would be displaced in a city where hotel rooms were scarce. I became the lightning rod for their anger, many of them vowing to tell their Congressmen to have me fired. On one occasion, my friend, the German manager of the Hilton Hotel said enough was enough, and he absolutely refused to accommodate the Kissinger party at the last minute. I pleaded with him, but he would

Library of Congress

not relent. What could I do but report the matter to the Foreign Ministry; the manager was threatened with arrest. The large accompanying Secret Service or State Department security contingent was always a problem, despite my lecturing to them in post - arrival briefing sessions. Invariably some Egyptian official, his wife, or a foreign diplomat would be brusquely handled or pushed aside with consequent repercussions.

Cairo was a three-ring circus during shuttle diplomacy. There were nights when I never went to bed. Sisco, Atherton, Saunders, Bunker, McCloskey, Eilts and I would sit in an ante-room, while Kissinger met behind closed doors with Sadat or Foreign Minister Fahmy until the wee hours of the morning. Periodically, there would be a call for one of the group to come in to assist on one matter or another. The watchword was, "They also serve who sit and wait." Generally, the meetings would be held in Cairo, but there were a number in Alexandria or elsewhere in the country. We then would be treated to flying around in Russian-made helicopters piloted by the Egyptian Air Force. These flights particularly would set my wife to worrying. She received more than her share of playing hostess to groups of these visitors; at times during some of our receptions, I would at the last minute be sent off on some mission to Alexandria or elsewhere and she would entertain the guests without me.

The Ambassador dealt with Secretary Kissinger, Sadat and Fahmy and the negotiations, and I was generally responsible for other activities, including the support operations. In all of this, I had the help of superb officers. I doubt if a better staff had been assembled anywhere. Ed Peck, April Glaspie, Beth Jones and John Craig immediately come to mind. Three of these officers are, or have been, ambassadors and the fourth surely will be. Dick Smith and then Mac Gerlach, who headed our administrative section, were the best in the business. I don't know what I would have done without all of them. They certainly pulled me through. How the staff managed to be responsive to the constant demands and vicissitudes was nothing short of remarkable.

Library of Congress

Everyone in the Embassy would breathe a sigh of relief, when the Kissinger plane departed. (laughter) Even then, there were anxious moments. I remember the Ambassador and me standing on the tarmac at the airport after having said goodbye and watching that big, fully-loaded Air Force 707 jet start taxiing down the runway. After going a distance, it stopped. We stood a long time in the sun waiting for it to move again, when word was received that there had been shots aboard the plane. Our first thought was that there had been an assassination attempt. There were numerous people other than the Kissinger party on the plane. It turned out that one of the Secret Service agents accidentally discharged his Uzi submachine gun. The delay was caused by efforts to make repairs, which were carried out by stuffing chewing gum in the holes in the fuselage. I still find that expediency procedure hard to believe. However, the plane did take off and obviously arrived at its destination.

As soon as diplomatic relations were reestablished, we were inundated with CODELs. Egypt had been off-limits for many years and Congressmen wanted to see the pyramids on one pretext or another. Some visits were troublesome not only from the administrative side, but from the political side as well. I recall going over to the Hilton Hotel one morning to pick up Senator McGovern. I was going to take him to meet with President Sadat and I came a bit early. As I was about to knock on his hotel room door, it opened and I ran into the senior representative of the PLO coming out of the room. At the time, we had a very strict policy of no contact with the PLO. It was quite an awkward situation; McGovern had not informed anyone of this proposed meeting, neither the Department nor the Embassy.

In June of 1974, I returned to Washington for a ten-day tour of Army Reserve duty. The Ambassador was not at all happy about my leaving, but felt that it would provide an opportunity for me to brief my replacement in the DCM job. With the reestablishment of relations, Cairo had reverted to being a Class I post, which now called for a Minister-level officer in the position. Richard Murphy, who had been Ambassador to Mauritania, was assigned and even appeared in the Foreign Service list in the position. In Washington, I

Library of Congress

met with Murphy and did my best to make the job sound attractive. I sensed that he saw Egypt as a real challenge, but obviously would rather have had his own Embassy. As matters developed, Damascus opened up and he became Ambassador to Syria. I had the feeling that Ambassador Eilts suspected me of having pulled a fast one to hang on to the DCM job, by discouraging Murphy. It wasn't until several months later that Frank Maestroni came out as Minister. In the meantime, Kissinger kept coming and President Nixon made a tumultuous swan-song visit.

I would be remiss if I didn't say something about the Nixon visit. It was a spectacular affair. President Nixon, beleaguered on all sides by Watergate, was seeking to bolster his prestige with a foreign success. We received a message from Washington instructing us to sound out Sadat on the matter. I recall being in the Ambassador's office when word came that not only would Sadat receive him, but we should assure President Nixon that the visit would be a triumphal affair. Indeed it was. Everywhere there were huge pictures of Sadat and Nixon. The Egyptian Government turned out people by the millions to line the road from the airport into town. Our motorcade was mobbed by welcoming crowds, really making us fear for our safety. On a trip up to Alexandria, there were crowds lining the railroad track all along the 90 mile route to greet President Nixon. The state dinner for 400 at one of King Farouk's palaces was one of the most memorable experiences of my life. Colorful mounted lancers in resplendent uniforms lined the route to the palace. At the dinner, Henry Catto, our Chief of Protocol and later Ambassador to England, who was sitting next to me, said he had never seen anything like it. I have always regretted that my wife missed this spectacle; she had to stay home with my young son, who had just come down with dengue fever. Of course, Nixon resigned and the Egyptian leadership could never understand what possessed the American people to force him out. They considered him a very, very capable leader.

At one point, I was sent up to reopen our Consulate General in Alexandria, which had been closed since being attacked in the Six Day War in 1967. It was a sad little ceremony in which I raised the flag over temporary quarters, while the still beautiful, but partially-

Library of Congress

gutted old building stood empty. When I returned, Ambassador Eilts asked me whether in view of my having to give up the DCM job, I would feel better being Consul General in Alexandria. It was a very gentlemanly thing to do. I told him that I thought I could be of more use in Cairo, even if it were in the lesser capacity of Counselor. The amount of work continued to be staggering and as it happened later in the tour I came down with a severe case of hepatitis that resulted in temporary memory loss and partial blindness. I got it, I believe, from one of the dinners eaten at the Palace. My wife said it was from being run down and overworked, making me receptive. It put me out of business for a couple of months. While I was in Cairo our working contacts were excellent, largely due to the Ambassador's cordial relationship with President Sadat and Foreign Minister Fahmy. My relations with Egyptian officials could not have been better. Foreign Office members even put up politely with my interminable visits, on instruction from Washington, to request them to vote with us on UN resolutions supporting Israel. Obviously, they would not, but they were very civil about it all.

After my tour in Egypt, I returned to Washington in the fall of 1975. I was assigned as the State Department representative on the Intelligence Community Staff. That organization while I was there served George Bush and later Stansfield Turner in their capacity as Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), as contrasted with their other function as Director of the CIA. In the former they had a responsibility as a coordinator for all foreign intelligence and reporting activities in the government. I had several duties. I served as the DCI's coordinator for the Monitoring of Overseas Direct Employment, commonly known as MODE. In that I saw to it that there was appropriate reporting coverage at posts around the world and that overlapping was kept to a minimum. I had approval authority over reporting assignments of the various agencies and services. I also was Chairman of an Interagency Advisory Group on Orientation and Training (OTAG) of reporting/intelligence personnel, which included representatives of the various government departments, the military services and the CIA. I was also given special projects by the Director of Central Intelligence. One I remember Stansfield Turner gave me; it was to provide an inventory of

Library of Congress

every intelligence asset in the government. For that task, I had to receive virtually every security clearance in existence. It was quite a job. It turned out to be a voluminous report, which took many months to complete.

When I was first assigned to the staff, there were three officers in our office, one from CIA, one from Defense and I from the State Department. After a year, Ambassador Edward Little was sent to head our group. He was succeeded by Ambassador John Holdridge. By the time I left, my old friend Ambassador Richard Davies, a Career Minister, had taken charge and our office had expanded considerably. Our location started at CIA Headquarters in Langley, Virginia, but within two years we had moved to within a few hundred yards of the White House. I spent four interesting years, about which I can say little, on the Intelligence Community Staff, but it did tend to take me out of the stream of things in the State Department.

In January of 1980, with 35 years of combined State Department and military service under my belt (that was the maximum allowable for compensation under the Foreign Service retirement system), I decided that I would retire and join my former boss, George Bush, on his presidential national campaign staff. Staying on would have meant, in the final analysis, that I actually would be working for less than a third of my salary. However, that was really no factor; finances were not a factor. I had been offered an assignment as State Department representative on the Sinai Peace Force. That entailed my family living in Rome, while I would have been located in the Sinai Desert. I had already served in Egypt. The challenge of a presidential campaign was far more alluring. I wrote to Jim Baker, who was Bush's Campaign Manager at the time, and was immediately welcomed aboard and asked to work with Pete Teeley, the Director of Communications, as well as on some special projects. I received a wonderful short course in backroom American politics in the campaign.

Q: I remember that's where we met; I was working on the campaign too. Do you have any final thoughts on the Foreign Service?

Library of Congress

KORMANN: Well, I found the Foreign Service tremendously challenging and rewarding. I never really had an uninteresting job. More often than not, I was placed in a position above my grade and given lots of work to do. Even at times when I was in jobs on the periphery, they were fascinating assignments. I often had a backseat in formative policy meetings, meetings on Vietnam, Germany, Russia and Eastern Europe, or on defense matters. I was a rapporteur, for example, for a key meeting of Far Eastern ambassadors, the Commander-in-Chief of our forces in the Pacific and State and Defense Department officials, while I was in Manila in 1964 that had far-reaching ramifications for the war in Vietnam. I attended numerous international conferences in Europe, Canada and the United States, which were extremely interesting. I found myself involved, in one way or another, in some of the crises of our time.

In going over the material for the Oral History Program, I noted one of the questions always asked is, "What do you think your greatest achievement was?" I thought about that for a long time. While I could cite several related to the work, itself, in my heart, I finally came to the conclusion that my greatest achievement was bringing my family through years of transfers, different posts, different places to live, different schools, and indeed some real dangers, and keeping it intact. My two sons and my daughter grew up to be fine adults, they married well and are highly successful in their careers; they have beautiful homes and lovely children. I have seven wonderful grandchildren. Furthermore, as I look back I may well have saved a life or two in peace and war during my career. In terms of what I might have considered a disappointment, there were none really. However, as I reflect on women in the work force today, I always feel a tinge of regret that the Foreign Service did not do more to give the wives the recognition they so justly deserve. When I joined the Service, it really got two for the price of one. My wife graduated number one in her class at Bryn Mawr College, one of the top women's institutions in the country. She won the prized European fellowship for a year abroad. She relinquished it to a happy runner-up to join me in the Foreign Service. She, herself, would have made one heck of an

Library of Congress

FSO. As it was, she did plenty of research for me and many of the reports I wrote would never have been completed without her.

I might say one final word about the kind of people with whom I worked. When I was a brand new officer going over to Germany, I remember talking to a colleague, who came from a prominent Boston family. We were conversing about our experiences in World War II, and I noticed he had been wounded and had a metal plate in his leg. He had been a pilot and I said to him in kidding fashion, "You know, with your family and all your connections, couldn't you have stayed out of harm's way a bit more?" He responded saying, "Oh no, I never could have done that...my family would never have accepted that." I thought at first he was putting me on, when he said his family expected him to be in the front lines, but he was totally serious. There was a sense of noblesse oblige in many of our people. I remember Under Secretary Livingston Merchant on one occasion talking to a group of us at a Foreign Service luncheon and saying, "You know the Foreign Service is an elite organization. You are all highly competitive. Ambition, the promotion system and efficiency ratings make you highly competitive. Combining that with constant uprooting and transfers to strange lands tends to breed insecurity and that has an impact on your family, your wives and children. You owe it to your fellow officers, therefore, never to do anything to undermine them, to add to that insecurity." I never forgot that message and as time went on I would try to convey that thought to some of my younger colleagues, particularly at efficiency rating time. I hope it did some good.

These are the kind of people we associated with in the Foreign Service, and I must say it was a privilege.

Q: I couldn't agree with you more, John. Thank you very much again.

End of interview